

Initial: 9/23/94	MILWAUKEE COUNTY EMS OPERATIONAL POLICY STANDARDS OF PRACTICE; ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved by: Kenneth Sternig, MS-EHS, BSN, EMT-P
Reviewed/revised: 2/16/11		Approved by: Ronald Pirrallo, MD, MHSA
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The mission of Milwaukee County EMS is to provide performance excellence in prehospital care through education, communication, operations, information and quality management, and scientific discovery.

I. Medical Control: It is the responsibility of the Emergency Medical Services Medical Director to:

- Assure that initial training to Emergency Medical Technicians meets the standards established by the State of Wisconsin and the EMS medical community.
- Provide continuing education to maintain knowledge and skill levels.
- Establish General Standards of Care, Medical Protocols, Standards for Practical Skills and Operational Policies and Medical Standards for Special Operations to define and guide professional practice.
- Supervise and evaluate individuals licensed within the system.
- Provide access to additional training or other support services as needed.
- Actively seek solutions to issues identified through the Quality Improvement process.
- Take appropriate corrective actions upon identification of activities by individuals that negatively impact on the EMS system and/or patient care.

II. EMS Provider: It is the responsibility of each individual provider to:

- Attain and maintain knowledge and skills necessary to safely practice as a licensed provider in the Milwaukee County System.
- Provide medical care within the scope of practice with the needs of the patient as the primary concern.
- Accept personal responsibility for maintenance of professional standards.
- Provide emergency medical services as outlined in Standards of Care, Medical Protocols, Standards for Practical Skills Operational Policies and Medical Standards for Special Operations of the Milwaukee County EMS System.
- Conduct his/her practice in a manner that reflects positively on self, peers, the employing agency and Milwaukee County EMS.

III. Performance Improvement process and mechanisms to identify issues and seek solutions

Evaluation and assessment of the quality of care provided to the public and of the individual practitioner in the Milwaukee County EMS System will be conducted on a regular basis. This includes, but is not limited to standards of care and protocol compliance monitoring.

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GOAL	MECHANISM
To encourage communication of the strengths and weakness of the system and to search for improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible Suggestion Box for members to deposit comments and ideas on improving patient care • Advertise and encourage System feedback via the Incident line at the Milwaukee County EMS Offices (414) 257-6663.
To monitor the current status of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrospective patient care record review • Retrospective review of Medical Command Form • Retrospective peer review of tapes and patient care records • Development and dissemination of patient questionnaire
To provide feedback on system and individual performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical reports on patient interactions • Field evaluations • Continuing education conferences • Refresher courses • Return of peer review of tapes and patient care records to originator of the record for feedback •
To plan for and implement system improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused audits to identify issues • Continuing education conferences • Participation in prehospital research • New product evaluations

IV. Due Process

Upon identification of a potential problem or upon receipt of a complaint regarding provision of prehospital care or the action of any individual(s) licensed within the Milwaukee County EMS System, it is the responsibility of the Medical Director and/or Program Director or his/her designee to investigate the allegations impartially and completely. Issues dealing with fire department policy need to be addressed with that fire department in accordance with their department procedures.

FACT-FINDING PHASE

All complaints or allegations must involve a *specific* incident(s) and may be entered by any individual or organization. Any individual named in a complaint has the right to all information obtained by Milwaukee County EMS, including the source of the complaint. Fact-finding activities will begin within two (2) working days* of the receipt of the complaint and should be completed within 14 days from initial notification of the incident. The Quality Manager or his/her designee is responsible for the initial contacts and collection of information.

*A "working day" is defined as a normal business day of Monday through Friday exclusive of State or Federal Holidays.

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OPERATIONAL POLICY
STANDARDS OF PRACTICE;
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Fact-finding activities will include contact with the complainant for additional information as necessary and telephone or personal contact with the EMS provider(s) involved.

The EMS provider(s) will be informed of the specific complaint and the individual or organization who brought the problem to the attention of Milwaukee County EMS.

The EMS provider(s) will respond verbally, providing such information as necessary to clarify or resolve the issues. Written replies may be requested by the Quality Manager and must be completed and submitted within 9 calendar days.

Information will be reviewed by the Medical Director and/or Program Director or his/her designee.

Any report classified as either *Educational* or *Disciplinary* will advance to the reconciliation phase.

An Education Issue is one in which it is perceived that the complaint/problem was created by a lack of understanding of academic foundation, Standard of Care, Medical Protocol(s) or System Policy(ies).

A Disciplinary Issue is one in which there is willful or repeated violation of a Standard of Practice, Medical Protocol or System Policy where the EMS provider has the appropriate academic foundation and/or has received remedial education regarding the Standard, Protocol or Policy.

RECONCILIATION PHASE

For Educational Issues, the EMS provider(s) involved will be notified by letter of the results of the fact-finding.

- The letter will be sent to the EMS provider's home address on file at the MC EMS offices.
- If, in the judgment of the Medical Director, the facts of the situation warrant a meeting to review academic material or policies/procedures, the EMS provider(s) will be instructed in the above letter to contact the Medical Director's office to arrange a meeting date and time.
- If the EMS provider(s) fails to contact the Medical Director within five (5) days of the date the letter was mailed, the Medical Director or designee will call the EMS provider at his/her place of employment to verify receipt of the letter and to schedule the educational session.
- The educational session will be conducted by the Medical Director or his/her designee. The time and place of the session will be established when the EMS provider calls the Medical Director but must be scheduled within five (5) working days of the call.

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- Failure to respond to the letter and telephone contact or refusal to attend a scheduled educational conference will be reported, verbally and in writing, to the EMS Liaison of the employing fire department accompanied by a request for formal action by the department. That report will contain the details of the complaint, the results of the fact finding and the documentation of contact with the EMS provider(s) involved.
- A copy of the fact-finding letter and a summary of the educational session will be kept on file at the Milwaukee County EMS offices.

In Disciplinary Issues, the EMS provider(s) involved will be notified by letter of the results of the fact-finding.

- The letter will be sent to the EMS provider's home address on file at MC EMS. A copy of that letter will be sent to the EMS Liaison of the employing fire department with a cover letter from the Medical Director requesting disciplinary action.
- The Medical Director retains the right to impose sanctions on the practice of any individual, including limits placed on patient contact from the start of the fact-finding phase through the disciplinary action of the employing fire department, if a potential risk to public safety is alleged.

Actions requested of the EMS Liaison of the employing fire department by the Medical Director may include but are not limited to:

- No disciplinary action indicated.
- Monitoring of performance for a specified time including specifics of who will do the monitoring and the evaluation tools employed to monitor progress.
- Counseling including specific issues of concern, improvement expected and the evaluation process to be used to determine progress.
- Written reprimand to the individual with copies to the employing agency and the EMS provider's file at the MC EMS offices.
- Probation with specifics of the conditional terms under which the EMS provider may continue to practice, the time of reviews and the behavioral changes expected with the evaluation tools to be used to monitor progress.
- Suspension from EMS provider duties.
- Withdrawal of Medical Control with written notification of the employing agency and the State of Wisconsin, EMS Section, that the Milwaukee County EMS System will no longer accept any medical responsibility for the actions of the individual.

Records of complaints, results of the investigations and the actions taken will be retained on file at Milwaukee County EMS. EMS provider and patient confidentiality are mandatory.